National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Federal Lands Transportation Program

Main Entrance Road Rehabilitation - Arches N.P.

The main entrance road at Arches National Park is one of three routes in the park listed in "poor" condition.

Mega-Project Profile: Arches Entrance Road

Estimated gross construction cost: $35 million (preliminary)

Percentage of IMR FLTP Annual Allotment: 70%

Percentage of NPS FLTP Annual Allotment: 14.5%

Arches National Park was first established as a National Monument in 1929, then as a National Park in 1971. The main entrance road into the park is 17.5 miles in length and is the only vehicular access to the approximate 2,000 natural and cultural resources of the park. These resources include natural stone arches, geologic feature, expansive view sheds, prehistoric rock art, archeological sites and historic structures.

The Main Park Road, Delicate Arch Road, and Windows Road are the three main routes within Arches National Park and are to be rehabilitated under this project for a total project length of 24 miles. The three routes are ranked in poor condition, both by the Road Inventory Program (RIP) and by Facility Condition Index (FCI). The average existing width is 22 feet and there are over 130 social pullouts along the routes. These social pullouts speed up the deterioration of the road shoulders, and in turn make it difficult to delineate the driving surface from the surrounding vegetation. Road and shoulder base materials are being dispersed into the neighboring delicate soils. The deterioration of the gravel shoulders has also become a safety concern as momentary inattention by drivers results in tires dropping off the pavement edge and the drivers are unable to safety correct the vehicle.

Since the Main Entrance Road was constructed in 1964, the park's annual visitation has increased from 100,000 to 1,040,758 in 2011. This increase in visitation has accelerated the decline of the road surfaces and shoulders.

The project would provide a designed top width of 11 foot driving lanes with a one foot shoulder, for a total paved width of 24 feet. It would also close several of the social pullouts and remedy the shoulder deterioration impacts to the surrounding environment. The work scope and associated cost estimate have made it necessary to break this project up into separate phases in order to accomplish the work within the existing Federal Lands Transportation Program.

The current estimate, escalated to the year 2015, is $35M. At current funding levels, it is anticipated that it will take three phases over a period of six years to complete the work.